

Greens sought public service help after Johnathan Davis allegations before telling Chief Minister

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■ WATCH: Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry says an independent inquiry will be established to examine the handling of allegations made against Johnathan Davis.

The ACT Greens sought support from the Chief Minister's Directorate to handle the fallout from allegations levelled at one of its members before telling the Chief Minister's office about the issue.

Greens leader Shane Rattenbury has also rejected the suggestion allegations against Johnathan Davis of serious sexual misconduct were kept from him, despite a Greens cabinet minister becoming aware of "rumours" a week before he was informed.

But there were "lessons to be learnt" due to incomplete advice sought from "appropriate channels", he said.

Mr Rattenbury and Greens minister Emma Davidson were grilled by Opposition Leader Elizabeth Lee and Labor's Marisa Paterson in committee inquiry hearings on Tuesday over their handling of allegations made against Mr Davis, a day after the party released a copy of its internal investigation report.

Mr Davis, who was accused of having sex with a 15 year old and an inappropriate, but not illegal, relationship with a 17 year old, resigned from the Assembly and his party late on Sunday night.

Mr Rattenbury on Tuesday rejected Ms Lee's suggestion Ms Davidson and the party's executive chief of staff met to "war game" the situation days before Mr Rattenbury was informed.

"I think your characterisation of war gaming carries a particular connotation which I don't accept," Mr Rattenbury said.



📷 Greens leader Shane Rattenbury on Monday. Picture by Karleen Minney

Ms Davidson said she was unable to make a complaint to police based on the rumours she had heard in late October, as she did not have a name or any further information.

It was appropriate to take the allegations to the most senior manager, Ms Davidson said, describing her role as requiring her to enable a staff member to provide the information to that manager.

Ms Davidson said she sent Mr Davis a text message during the week she knew about the "rumours" but did not discuss them with Mr Davis, who was away from Canberra.

Mr Rattenbury also acknowledged the party's "oversight" in failing to report the allegations to the Assembly's speaker, in line with a clear government policy requirement.

The party sought advice on its obligations from public service, which Mr Rattenbury said made no mention of the obligation to report the matter to the speaker's office.

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"I can tell the committee is that that was an oversight and that has been completed today," he said, adding later: "We sought professional advice and that professional advice did not identify that obligation under that policy."

Mr Rattenbury said the experience showed there were "lessons to be learnt" to improve the handling of serious complaints.

ACT Solicitor-General Peter Garrisson SC on Tuesday said his office had provided "high level" advice on the handling of the allegations to the Chief Minister's Directorate, without knowing the full factual basis of the allegations or that it was a request from the Attorney-General's office.

Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry said it was concerning the Greens did not inform Chief Minister Andrew Barr's office of their internal investigation or the allegations.

"Obviously, this terrible situation has occurred, but how it was managed could have been very different had the Chief Minister's office been informed," she said.

Ms Berry said she would have thought there was enough trust and a professional relationship for Mr Rattenbury to explain the situation to Mr Barr.

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